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ABSTRACT

The report presents recommendations from a 1981 meeting sponsored by Unesco (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization) on the topic of integration of severely/multiply handicapped persons into general and vocational education. A summary of discussion topics addresses terminology; the concept of integration--its advantages and limitations; types of integrated education/vocational systems; preparation for integration (early detection, parent training and support, and specific programming for integration); and such general issues as legislation, research, and the problems of underdeveloped countries. The second part of the report presents conclusions and recommendations involving such concerns as right to education, legislation, models of integration, access, standards of professional staff in special education, role of the parents and the community, leisure activities, finance, and regional and international cooperation. (CL)

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Meeting of Experts on Integration of Severely and Multiply Handicapped Persons into General and Vocational Education

Stiftung Rehabilitation,
Heidelberg, 26-30 October 1981

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Final Report

EC160026

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the Unesco programme during the International Year for Disabled Persons (IYDP), an international meeting of experts was held at the Stiftung Rehabilitation at Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany, from 26 to 30 October 1981. The meeting was organized by the German Commission for Unesco in collaboration with Unesco Secretariat, its topic being the integration of severely and multiply handicapped persons into general and vocational education.

Acceptance of the principle of integration implies a recognition that all persons, irrespective of the severity of any handicapping conditions, have the right to live, be educated, enjoy leisure and be supported in environments which place minimal restrictions upon freedom and personal dignity. However, although this general principle has been incorporated into a number of Unesco reports and public documents, it is only recently that some of its more important implications have been recognized. The feasibility of organizing fully integrated educational and vocational services for the severely and multiply handicapped has been the subject of considerable discussion. Most professional workers in the field would agree that this group of handicapped people, although relatively small in number, provide a significant challenge to all aspects of the delivery of rehabilitation services. The selection of the theme of the integration of severely and multiply handicapped into ordinary and vocational education for the meeting was therefore extremely timely.

The meeting may be seen as having considerable significance in two areas. Firstly, it affirmed that the goals of full participation and equality must be achieved for even the most severely handicapped members of society. Secondly, it demonstrated that although integration is accepted as an ultimate goal, the means by which this is approached vary enormously even among societies at comparable stages of social and economic development. The meeting produced some important outcomes and will eventually have an impact upon the provision of services for the severely and multiply handicapped. If this is so, it will be a most fitting tribute to the memory of Nils-Ivar Sundberg, who made a major contribution both to the organisation of the meeting and its discussions. He will be greatly missed by his immediate colleagues and friends and by the large number of persons who benefited by his personal warmth, his wisdom and his untiring efforts to serve the handicapped throughout the international community. Nineteen experts from fifteen countries attended the meeting together with nine observers (Annex 3).

Participants were asked to reply to a questionnaire prepared by Unesco in order to obtain brief position statements and to facilitate discussion of the three main topics identified within the conference agenda for the meeting (Annex 1). These were (a) the extent of integration of severely and multiply handicapped persons into general and vocational education, (b) suggestions for preventive action and for models of integration both in general and vocational education as well as in the social context, and (c) suggestions for national and international action. They were also provided with a working document written by Mr. I. Skov Jørgensen which discussed the topic for the meeting with reference to the provision of services in Denmark. Participants' replies to the questionnaire were also circulated in advance of the meeting.

The meeting was formally opened by Mr. Dedo von Kerssenbrock von Krosigk, Minister Counsellor and Head of the Unesco Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany. Mr. von Krosigk referred to the goals of national and international initiatives in seeking to achieve better understanding of the handicapped and to provide them with better help. He affirmed the importance of being able to lead an independent life at work and leisure but stressed the difficulties of those with severe and multiple handicaps experience in achieving this goal. Through a well-developed school system and enlightened policies much can be done in education and vocational training in particular the latter was seen as being of crucial importance. Mr. von Krosigk mentioned a large number of model programmes and research studies which are concerned with the integration of the handicapped child in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Prof. Dr. Elmar Wiedemann, Member of the Governing Board of the Stiftung Rehabilitation also addressed the meeting at its opening session, which was attended by Dr. H. W. Rissom from the Education Section of the German Commission for Unesco.

The meeting elected Prof. Dr. Werner Herrman (Federal Republic of Germany) Chairman; Mr. Nadiem H. Shwayri (Lebanon) and Mrs. Eloisa G. E. de Lorenzo (Uruguay) Vice-Chairman; Prof. James Ward (Australia) Rapporteur-General; Prof. Aleksander Hulek (Poland) and Mr. Jeptha Greer (U.S.A.) Sous-rapporteurs.

I. SUMMARIES OF THE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. Report of the proceedings

The following report of the proceedings is divided into two sections: (1) a summary of the materials available to the meeting either in written form or on the basis of discussion and (2) a list of recommendations for national and international action. The materials for (1) derive from both plenary and sub-commission discussions; responses to the questionnaire issued prior to the meeting; additional papers tabled during the meeting by participants and observers and other written comments. The section will be further divided into four broad areas of content: terminology, the concept of integration - advantages and limitations, models for educational and vocational preparation and general issues.

2. Terminology

Definition of severe and multiple-handicap

The meeting received a wide variety of views regarding terminology in the area of severe and multiple handicap. Some participants questioned the need for specific terminology, pointing to the possible discriminatory effects of any form of categorization, however scientific. Others, whilst accepting the need for scientific terminology were nevertheless insistent that it should not reduce flexibility in delivering services and that it should be functional in nature leading to more effective programming. Attention was drawn to the range of meanings attached to such terms as "impairment", "disability" and "handicap", a problem which is currently being tackled through the efforts of WHO to arrive at acceptable terminology.

It was further pointed out that the effects of any handicapping condition are relative to the age of the child, the precise nature of the disability and the contexts in which behaviour is required. In view of these it may not be possible to arrive at terms sufficiently precise to be used in countries of different stages of development. Even so, one attempt at definition received general if not unanimous support. It was suggested that:

(a) a severely handicapped child is one who due to anatomic organic defects, disfunctional and psychic disorders, encounters very great difficulties in availing himself of normal forms of schooling, family life, vocational and leisure-time activities. Here it was stressed that environmental conditions largely determine the effects of handicap;

(b) a "multiply handicapped" child is one who has more than one handicap which severely affects functioning as described under (a).

The multiplicative effects of more than one handicap were acknowledged but many participants considered that it was difficult to draw a demarcation line between severe or non-severe forms of handicap since their effects depend upon many factors, physical, emotional and social.

However, although the above would seem to conform to the current demand for identifying functional disability, it was nevertheless concluded that the problem of terminology would require further examination.

Whilst accepting that the goal of all rehabilitation services is the total integration of the handicapped person into society, the meeting recognized that the term had acquired a number of meanings and interpretations: for instance, it is often used interchangeably with the terms "mainstreaming" and "normalization". However, integration is probably the most useful generic term, referring as it does to the social, physical and functional aspects of the handicapped person's adjustment to society.

3. The concept of integration - advantages and limitations

In an extremely wide-ranging and exhaustive discussion probably the most significant point made was the need to distinguish between optimal integration as a goal for rehabilitation and as a method for achieving the goal. Whereas no participant rejected the goal of eventual integration, even for the most severely handicapped, there was considerable discussion over the issue of whether integrated rehabilitation services were the best means of achieving it. This debate, though ostensibly relating to the basic issue, led to the emergence of integration as a somewhat flexible concept in which the individual's specific needs are matched to environmental circumstances.

The need for a flexible attitude was well illustrated by reference to the extreme diversity of the groups designated as severely and multiply handicapped. These range from the profoundly retarded to the intelligent deaf/blind; from the autistic to the multiply physically/perceptually handicapped and may demand a highly specialized if not individualized approach to the rehabilitation process.

(a) Types of integrated education/vocational systems

The capacity of a system to integrate severely handicapped or multiply handicapped children is constrained by the nature and severity of their handicaps and the resources available. In a well-developed educational system, full integration in normal schools is one of many possible approaches to the education of handicapped children. Among the various options identified are:

i. Fully integrated systems (sometimes called a "zero reject" model). The systems place severely handicapped children in regular schools, ideally with additional teaching/care resources.

ii. Partially integrated systems

These are basically of two types: firstly those in which handicapped children, whilst remaining on the roll of a regular school, receive much of their educational programming in special units or resource rooms; secondly, arrangements whereby children in a special unit or school spend some of their school day in the regular school.

Variations upon the concept of partial integration include visiting specialized teachers, short-term withdrawal units, habilitation and rehabilitation and work preparation centres. Whilst having the ultimate goals of integration and independent living, these facilities are designed to provide the highest levels of instructional expertise and environmental prosthesis.

iii. Segregated systems

These include open-door institutions; day special schools; Monday-Friday residential special schools, full-time residential special schools. Some segregated facilities provide vocational training and facilities for sheltered employment with the aim of achieving optimal levels of functioning through environmental support.

(b) Advantages claimed for the fully or maximally integrated approach

The following general advantages have been claimed for the concept of integration:

i. it is compatible with basic human rights in that it recognizes the handicapped as persons in their own right and reduces the likelihood of stigmatization;

ii. in educational/vocational terms it is not necessarily inferior to segregated environments;

iii. there are considerable benefits to peers, teachers, parents and the community at large which stem from the integration of the handicapped child into formal education. These include enhancement of the school's competence to accomodate individual differences, the development of tolerance and positive attitudes through personal contact.

(c) Reservations about the concept of full integration

Reservations over a policy of full integration for severely and multiply handicapped children are both philosophical and technical in nature. In the course of considerable discussions on the topic, several points were made mainly by participants from East European countries which possess well-organized segregated systems of special education. Firstly, it was stated that the severely handicapped initially need to be taught the skills necessary for them to interact with and learn from the same curricula as their normal peers. Secondly, it was pointed out that the various physical and perceptual conditions which are involved in severe handicaps require treatment in well-staffed and well-equipped specialized facilities. Thirdly, those high-level instructional and support techniques necessary for full development could only be provided by well-trained specialist staff. Fourthly, a comprehensive system of specialized education and vocational preparation could achieve the levels of achievement necessary for full participation and acceptance.

However what seemed to be major differences between the philosophies of countries at comparable levels of development were more apparent than real. Even in those countries most firmly devoted to full integration there were still considerable numbers of handicapped children in specialized institutions. Participants therefore recognised the need for organising a continuum of services in order to cater fully for individual needs. In choosing a particular facility for a child the main criterion was that of availability of appropriate instructional and prosthetic support.

4. Preparation for the integration of handicapped children into formal education and vocational preparation

It was proposed that the principle of integration should be applied as far as is possible and feasible. In some instances where it may still be deemed necessary to establish separate educational facilities, these should be as near as possible to the child's family and integrated into the community's life to the greatest possible extent. Such facilities should also aim at preparing handicapped children for integration into the normal school at the earliest stages of of their lives. In either approach appropriate technology and staffing are essential components.

Early detection

The meeting stressed the importance of early detection of handicap, reiterating the emphasis given to this topic in the report of the 1979 Unesco Expert Meeting on Special Education. Parents should be made aware of their child's handicaps as early as possible and be informed of the many problems which may occur particularly during the early months of life. The future development of severely and multiply handicapped children depends upon providing optimal conditions for intellectual, social, psychological and emotional growth in infancy and early childhood.

Parent training

It was noted that parents play a crucial role in helping to integrate handicapped children into society. They can be trained not only to manage the everyday problems which emerge from serious handicap but also to become active teachers of their child, particularly in such areas as communication and self-help. For these purposes, training should be as practical as possible, involving the whole family, and not merely mothers as has been traditional practice in many countries. It was felt that there is a growing consciousness on the part of parents in many areas of the world with regard to the advantages of integrating handicapped children into the normal system of education. In particular it seems that an integrated education system leads the way to independent living more effectively than one based upon a segregated system. Indeed it was emphasized that parents should be regarded at least as partners to training personnel and often as experts in the rehabilitation of their children. However, the meeting saw a need for improved coordination of the activities of professional staff such as social workers and parents.

Support for parents

A full range of social support services should be provided including social workers and welfare officers. Advice and guidance from these agencies should encourage parents and the young disabled person to benefit from rehabilitation and educational processes. Financial support should also be available, where necessary, to cover additional costs in everyday life and access to leisure time activities.

Preparation for school

It was considered essential that the severely handicapped or multiply handicapped child should enter school with the adequate level of competence available through up-to-date rehabilitation techniques, provided where appropriate by a

multi-disciplinary team. When integration into the regular school is planned it is necessary that class teachers, peers and the total school environment should be prepared so as to give the maximum support and stimulation. Throughout the meeting the relativity of a disability to its social/educational context was restated. This referred both to the potential of the school to minimize the effects of handicap and to avoid the creation of unnecessary social and educational marginality.

Programming for integration

Irrespective of the level of integration the following components of programming for the severely and multiply handicapped were identified:

(a) Physical: This refers to firstly the absence of architectural or other physical barriers at home, school, on the roads leading to school or other institutions necessary to the rehabilitation of severely and multiply handicapped children and secondly to the provision of adequate prosthetic aids.

(b) Social: Schools should attempt to provide maximum opportunities for social interaction between handicapped and non-handicapped children with a view to developing attitudes of initial acceptance and positive regard. Experience has shown that it is possible for such developments to occur, particularly were schools enjoy full community support for the policy of integration. However, successful integration demands that continuous attention be given to promoting positive attitudes on behalf of teachers, peers and parents.

(c) Functional: The developmental of optimal levels of functional skills demands effective programme design and the application of modern learning technology to achieve programme aims. In the case of severely handicapped children programs almost invariably need to be individualized although there is a place for group instruction and participation in formal or creative activities on an unstructured basis. In the course of discussion it was pointed out that in addition to instituting change in the individual it was necessary to engineer changes in environments. The meeting did not comment upon specific technologies but saw a significant need for research and technological development of all types. Inevitably the problem of providing adequate resources in the form of trained staff and prosthetic devices arose in the discussion. This was of particular importance to the organisation of services in developing countries.

Vocational education and preparation for independent living

The educational components of vocational education comprise vocational guidance, vocational training and employment.

a) Vocational guidance

It was generally agreed that the severely and multiply handicapped should be given full vocational guidance facilities and that these should be introduced well in advance of their school leaving age. Vocational guidance for this group is inevitably concerned with training for independent living and in view of this the North America con cept of career education is highly relevant. Some doubts were, however, expressed about training for narrow and repetitive employment.

Several participants mentioned the need to anticipate future change in work patterns due to technological change.

b) Vocational training

Programmes for work and independent living

In the case of severely and multiply handicapped persons it may be difficult to distinguish between vocational and other forms of education. In general the length of vocational training depends upon the severity of the handicap(s) and the requirements of the work to be undertaken. In some countries, mainly the Eastern European states, vocational training is based upon compulsory education in technical schools.

In general the teaching methods to be used for handicapped children are the same as those used in normal vocational schools but due consideration has to be given to the difficulties which stem from disability.

Vocational training should be designed on an individual basis so as to develop the maximum potential of the disabled person. Whenever possible programs should be adapted to industrial, agricultural and economic needs.

c) Employment

Employers should be encouraged to create the maximum number of jobs for disabled persons. However, in some cases it may be necessary to create separate employment facilities such as sheltered workshops or cooperatives for disabled persons.

Staff training

The meeting identified the provision of adequate numbers of qualified staff as an urgent and imperative need. All staff working with children should be acquainted with the needs of severely and multiply handicapped children and the basic methods by which these can be met.

All personnel whether in regular or special schools should be made aware of the value of integrating disabled children into the normal school system and other areas of everyday life. Attempts to create this awareness should be made in the training of teachers both at universities and other tertiary education institutions. Other personnel engaged in special education, e.g. physicians, psychologists, social workers, technicians, etc. should also be informed of these issues and should receive training in the principles and practices of rehabilitation systems.

Organisation

Responsibility for the general and vocational education of the severely and multiply handicapped should normally rest with educational authorities despite the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to delivering services. However, this requires coordination of all government and non-government services in order to avoid duplication of efforts and waste of resources. Society's commitment to

providing efficient and comprehensive services for the severely and multiply handicapped should extend throughout their lives but this does not remove the need for continual efforts to ensure that programmes are both well organised and cost effective.

5. General issues

Among the wide range of general issues raised, the following attracted a considerable amount of discussion:

Legislation

It was emphasized that the same laws should govern the education of both handicapped and non-handicapped persons. In the event of a new law establishing compulsory education being introduced, it should include children with all types of handicaps, even the most severe. All legal means should be adopted so as to remove discrimination against the handicapped.

Legislation concerning disabled persons should encourage them to accept rehabilitation and appropriate employment.

When preparing relevant legislation, the opinions of disabled persons and their parents should be fully taken into account.

Financial

Vocational education and the employment of severely handicapped persons should be fully integrated into social insurance and social welfare schemes. Work in sheltered workshops and home employment should be covered by these schemes.

All technical aids which can help to overcome or reduce the effects of handicaps should be exempted from customs duties and taxes. As far as possible individual technical aids in education should be available free of charge to those individuals who need them.

Research

The Meeting recognised the need for research into the prevention and treatment of severe and multiple handicaps. In particular the need for research into effective educational and social programming was noted.

The problems of underdeveloped countries

The Meeting acknowledged the immense problems faced by developing countries in their efforts to provide adequate rehabilitative services. However, in discussing the issue of priorities the general feeling was that no universal model was possible and that each individual country should therefore identify its own needs and priorities. Here it was accepted that many developing countries had long traditions of positive social attitudes and support for the handicapped. Even so there appeared to be a significant need for training, information regarding programmes and technical assistance of all types.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. General

a) The Meeting supports the view that the severely and multiply handicapped have the right to live, be educated, work and enjoy leisure in an environment which places minimal restrictions if any, upon their freedom and personal dignity. At the same time their environment should provide the necessary support for maximum personal development, communication with others, self-expression and fulfilment of personal relationships at work and leisure.

b) By this, the Meeting re-affirms the recommendations of previous Unesco documents, such as the 1979 UNESCO Expert Meeting on Special Education: Final Report, and urges that follow-up activities to these recommendations should not exclude the severely and multiply handicapped.

c) Furthermore, the meeting expresses its support for the objectives of I.Y.D.P. and hopes that the impetus it has created will include major developments in improving the integration of severely and multiply handicapped persons into the general educational and vocational training systems.

d) As an overall goal it is recommended that all educational, social, leisure and employment provisions for severely and multiply-handicapped persons be orientated towards full integration. Segregated facilities should only be used when appropriate services cannot be provided within the existing educational system.

e) In recommending d), the Meeting recognized the necessity for a flexible approach to integration; Member States may differ in their views as to how integration may be achieved and will recognize that some severely and multiply handicapped persons will need the highly specialized prosthetic, instructional and management facilities available so far mostly in a segregated setting.

2. Right to education

Whereas it is clear that severely and multiply-handicapped children share with their peers such needs as security, giving and receiving affection, intellectual stimulation, achievement and self-expression, many are suffering gross deprivation in these areas: it could be argued, for example, that the severely or profoundly retarded persons living in institutions were among the most disadvantaged groups in contemporary society. However, the major part of the discussion centered around the right of severely and multiply handicapped children to be integrated into the educational system.

Member States should make every effort to ensure equality of access to education for severely and multiply handicapped children. Education for handicapped persons should be provided as far as possible, within the existing educational system of the country, using separate educational facilities only when no other alternative is possible.

3. Legislation

a) Countries should adopt appropriate legislative measures, which protect the handicapped person from discrimination within society. These include the provisions for access of handicapped persons to national insurance schemes and access to free educational materials necessitated by their handicaps.

b) Countries should closely survey the enforcement of laws protecting handicapped persons. However, legislative provisions should be designed in such a way that they stimulate the desire of the handicapped persons to participate actively in the world of work.

c) Legislation should also decree the financial resources from the national budgets to muster the additional resources for special programs for handicapped persons.

4. Models of integration

After a long and diversified discussion, the group agreed that there does not exist a universal model of integrating severely and multiply handicapped children into any given educational system. The family, social and economic environment of a handicapped child calls for continued adaptation of educational services to the individual needs of each child. Variations in the degree and kind of handicap ultimately influence the degree of integration into normal life for a handicapped child.

a) The group, therefore, restricted itself to recommend to Member States that no effort should be spared to make individualized educational services available in order to ensure the highest possible degree of integrating handicapped children into the educational system, the community and society at large.

5. Organisation of services

a) Educational provisions for the severely and multiply handicapped should be based upon a multi-disciplinary approach. Such provisions should involve the cooperative efforts of a wide range of professions, parents and the handicapped persons themselves.

b) The following aspects should be fully considered when developing educational services for handicapped persons:

- prevention
- early detection and intervention
- preparation for education
- education with appropriate technical support
- preparation for work and independent living

c) Vocational preparation should include:

- preparation for work schemes
- career guidance
- placement
- in-service training

d) Continuing education for the severely and multiply handicapped should be provided.

e) Member States should establish effective mechanisms concerned with the coordination and delivery of services. Such bodies should establish efficient links with organisations and groups (i.e. consumer organisations, parent groups). However, whereas a variety of disciplines is involved in the delivery of services to the severely and multiply handicapped, their needs are primarily educational in nature.

f) The responsibility for the coordination of services for disabled persons should be assigned to departments or ministries of education.

6. Development of appropriate technologies

The improvement of technological aids to handicapped persons will improve the level of communication between handicapped persons and others, leading to a better mutual understanding and thus help the integration process of handicapped persons into society.

Member States should be encouraged to promote the development of new technological devices in order to allow for a better adaptation of handicapped persons to the ever changing living conditions of modern society.

7. Access to buildings and means of transportation

The Meeting noted that some Member States had made considerable efforts to improve the access to public and private buildings for handicapped persons.

Increased efforts should be made to remove architectural barriers for handicapped persons and all public services be adequately equipped to allow their easy use. Improvement of these conditions would allow a fuller degree of participation of the handicapped in daily life, giving him at the same time an increased independence from others.

8. Standards of professional staff in special education

a) It was generally recognized that the training of adequate staff is one of the keys to the success of an educational programme for severely and multiply handicapped persons. Much needs to be done in this field, both in developed and developing countries.

b) Training programmes for future teachers of the handicapped should include psychological training in order to develop the right attitudes towards handicapped persons and towards a better understanding of disabilities and handicaps in general.

Member States should give high priority to training adequate personnel for educating handicapped persons, including the provision of in-service training courses and special crash programmes for teachers already in service. Such training could gradually ensure a better integration of handicapped children into the formal education system.

9. Role of parents and the community

The role of the parents to assist a child in coping with its handicap is fundamental since the upbringing of a handicapped child affects the whole of family life, needing crucial readjustments of attitudes among both parents and siblings.

a) To ease the strains on the family with handicapped children, the participants recommend that adequate educational and psychological services be provided to them. Parents' counselling and parents' participation in educational activities of the child are needed to be improved or, in many countries to be established. Close cooperation between the parents and the teachers is absolutely essential in order to best assist the child to develop its full potential.

b) Member States should not spare efforts to promote the public awareness to the problem of integrating handicapped children into society. Public information programmes using all available mass media, should be developed and disseminated on a large scale in order to help the public understand problems of handicapped persons living under social conditions. Small community development programmes should be established, especially in rural areas geared to alleviate the isolation of handicapped persons and facilitate their full participation in all aspects of life.

10. Leisure activities

It was considered that the severely and multiply handicapped should be integrated into community leisure activities. These activities could act as a vehicle for normalizing the life of these persons. As leisure activities are frequently not based upon competitive achievement, it is there that joint activities of disabled and non-disabled persons should be promoted.

11. Finance

In their financial support for educational and social services Member States should provide equally for all children.

In the case of a Member State being unable to provide education for all children, it should represent severely and multiply handicapped children proportionally in its system.

Where appropriate, severely and multiply handicapped persons should receive supplementary social security benefits in order to meet special needs associated with their handicaps.

12. Research data

The Meeting noted the extreme lack of data, both from basic and applied research, relating to the severely and multiply handicapped.

a) Member States should recognize the need for such research and include it into their priorities for development.

b) Existing information on research data should be made more readily available on an international basis in order to avoid the overlap of efforts.

13. National, regional and international activities

a) Under this item the group discussed the need for qualified personnel in the field of special education.

It was proposed that regional training institutes be created which would have several tasks. They could provide for intensive training courses for teachers and parents who, upon return to their countries, would create a small nucleus of training facilities for other teachers and parents. In addition, these institutes (or centres) could advise governments in the region on how best to develop an integrated educational system in their respective countries. A further task could be to design appropriate teaching material and act as a catalyst for technical assistance programmes in each region.

b) The additional financial resources necessary for the creation of such centres should be made available.

c) There exist already many projects in the field of special education undertaken by governments, international governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations. Effective coordination of these programmes is necessary. Some of the group considered that information on ongoing projects should be made available, even only in summary form.

d) There was a general feeling that far more information is needed on all aspects of the life of the severely and multiply disabled handicapped. The need for information was considered equally important for developed and developing countries.

In the context of advising developing countries, the issue of priorities in the development of special education facilities, including those for the severely handicapped, was discussed. Since these depend on many local factors several participants considered it inappropriate at this stage to make any firm recommendations on this matter.

14. Regional and international cooperation

a) Unesco and non-governmental organisations should promote and organise international and regional seminars, workshops and symposia with regard to severely and multiply handicapped persons;

b) Regional training programs should be established with a view to training teachers and parents who on return to their countries would create opportunities for training other teachers and parents;

c) Technical assistance should be provided to enable developing countries to establish educational systems promoting the integration of handicapped children.

d) Unesco should promote the maximum stimulus to research of all types in the field of severe and multiple handicaps.

e) Unesco should commission a comparative study on recent developments in the field of severe and multiple handicaps. This study should be based on several case studies.

III. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The meeting recognises that, in most countries, the optimal acceptance and integration of the handicapped is far from being achieved and that progress towards these goals depends upon complex factors which may vary considerably from country to country. However, without claiming that the list is exhaustive, participants identify the following important areas for attention by member countries in their attempts to reach full integration:

- Establishment of clear social priorities with regard to the severely and multiply handicapped
- legislation
- effective instruments for policy and planning
- resource management, particularly the organisation of appropriate multi-disciplinary services
- change in community attitudes
- improvement of service delivery
- research and technical development of all types
- design of prosthetic human and physical environments
- translation of relevant basic research into practice
- training in stress and conflict management
- international cooperation in training and the dissemination of information
- consideration of the rights of the handicapped including due regard to their expectations

On the issue of priorities, the Meeting stressed that full economic and social growth depends in part upon the harmonious development of all groups within society, including the most disadvantaged. It is therefore in the interest of governments to full develop the potential of all their citizens, using all available resources to hasten progress towards full participation and equality.

The above recommendations are addressed to governments and international organisations, especially Unesco which has a leading role to play in the development of educational and vocational programs for severely and multiply handicapped persons. They recognise that the integration of the handicapped depends largely upon the political will of individual governments but that the international community also has a major responsibility through dissemination of information and provision of technical assistance. This applies particularly to the support of initiatives taken by developing countries.

A G E N D A

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Election of the officers for the meeting

3. Adoption of schedule and methods of work

4. Extent of integration of severely and multiply handicapped persons into general and vocational education

5. Suggestions for preventive action and for models of integration both in general and vocational education as well as in the social context

6. Suggestions for national and international action

7. Adoption of main conclusions of the meeting

8. Closure of the meeting

ANNEX 2

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION CONCERNING INTEGRATION OF SEVERELY AND MULTIPLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN SCHOOLS AND IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A. Delimitation of the subject

1. Pedagogical-psychological description of handicap/disability.

The word handicap is not used in the same way in medical, social and pedagogical contexts. There are conceptual differences in various countries, conditioned by cultural patterns and educational traditions. In addition, some countries use pedagogical slang, according to which all scholastic difficulties are manifestations of some handicap/disability.

A pedagogically useful description of functional inhibitions and strengths from the point of view of learning comprises personality and environmental factors. The linguistic nuance between handicapped/disabled pupils' and 'pupils with handicaps/disabilities' may give rise to professional considerations.

What is expected of an attitude towards special-pedagogical support?

2. Degree of difficulty and combinations of disabilities.

The classical division in disability areas is broken by the existence of several simultaneous disabilities. As examples of the combination of two disabilities deafness-blindness, spasticity-speech defect and psychic deviation-mental retardation can be mentioned. If all forms and degree of disability are taken into consideration the possible combinations become multiple.

In this case it is often necessary to make use of different pedagogical experts. Multiplicity contains a risk of generalisation at the cost of competence.

How can the concept 'multi-handicapped' be defined?

3. Integration as an aim or means and as a pedagogical situation or progress.

The aim of all teaching is learning and development of personality. Behind the desire to integrate lies the expectation that an ordinary school environment is more stimulating than an isolated existence in a special institution for both pupils and personnel.

The difficulties can, however, be so serious that no contact with others is created and being together is felt to be an unreasonable burden for both the disabled and the able-bodied.

It has also been put forward that disabled persons have a need to be amongst others with more or less the same problems in order to build up their own identity. From this point of view, integration

should in some cases be combined with segregation with the individual aim of socialising, taking part in the possibilities of the community and its tasks, sharing responsibility and acquiring an optimal knowledge of skills.

In recent years there has been interest in the acceptance of disabled persons on their own terms. This raises the question of 'positive discrimination' towards the disabled, especially in the context of education.

Can flexibility be combined with integration as a guiding principle for the teaching of disabled persons?

B. Special pedagogical support for the severely and multiply handicapped

4. Special pedagogical support as part of the habilitation process.

Special pedagogical support consists, among other things, of counselling, apportioning of aids and special teaching. This is part of the total offer society makes to disabled persons for normalisation. Originally rehabilitation was a medical responsibility. Around the turn of the century it also became a responsibility of the social sector. Today the pedagogical-psychological contribution to habilitation and cooperation between the three sectors is significant.

One can differentiate between special teaching that reduces or limits the effect of the disability (speech correction, aural training, teaching in braille) and teaching in ordinary subjects, in such a way that by choice of method and aids the pupils' difficulties are taken into account.

In general, special teaching is characterized by the increased use of resources, training of personnel, parental influence, inter-disciplinary cooperation, transport requirements, building requirements and special methods and aids.

What is special about special teaching for the multi-handicapped?

5. The prerequisite for the most possibilities in the educational process is - other things being equal - a successful school education. Studies show also that early pedagogical effort is of importance for the schooling of disabled students. The teaching and education of disabled perople should therefore be planned and administered as a whole.

Administrative integration means that those authorities which are responsible for teaching and education for the rest of the population are also responsible for similar arrangements for the disabled.

6. Physical, functional and social integration.

Placing in an ordinary school or even in an ordinary class gives no guarantee that the disabled person achieves contact with an ordinary section of his age-group.

Even if the teaching can be adjusted so that the disabled pupil functions with the class his present and future needs are not necessarily met.

Social integration, to a greater extent for disabled rather than for able-bodied persons, requires planning for leisure time and work (occupation).

How does the school contribute to meaningful and future-orientated activities for severely disabled pupils beyond the school situation?

C. Aims to reach the greatest possible degree of independence as an adult.

7. Preparation for an independent way of life, occupation and leisure time.

Some societies make a pension available for the severely handicapped, in some cases from the age of 15, and prior to this compensation for special expenses to the parents. The amounts often become part of the family's common economy and make it difficult for the young person to leave home. As part of the activity of the school, youth colleges for 16-20 year-old handicapped persons should be established with the necessary help in the form of training for self-help.

Is there concrete experience with combined care and youth colleges?

Depending on the emphasis the pupil himself, the parents and the society place on participation in production, vocational education must be part of the school programme for the severely disabled, but in all cases training in practical skills (A.D.L. training) is of fundamental importance.

How early and how can consideration of future occupation be included in planning of special teaching for the multi-handicapped?

The most serious objection to integration of the handicapped in ordinary classes and the resulting decentralisation has been that they must miss their friends in their leisure time. Studies do not show that those who live at home feel more lonely than those in institutions, but communication problems outside school are often mentioned.

How can the school contribute to increasing possibilities for leisure activities for the multi-handicapped?

8. Vocational education.

Most countries have at present unemployment among young people. This increases the difficulties of placing disabled persons in trade and industry.

There can be a question of adjusted work functions, protected places of work and special workshops.

The classical choice of training for particular categories of disabled persons should be revised, but at the same time educational planning

for them should be adjusted to the new occupational possibilities.

How can cooperation be organised between the education sector, the parties to the labour market and public authorities on community-regulated work opportunities for the severely disabled?

9. Declarations of intentions and grants.

Many acts and ministerial orders give an idealized picture of the special pedagogical measures in the country. This can be due to disproportions between intentions and grants, but it is seldom less an economic question than a question of convenience. It is easier to care for severely disabled persons than to create conditions for self-help.

How does one create contact between education and working life with the aim of reducing the distance between what is done and what could be done to integrate disabled persons into the life of the society?

ANNEX 3

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